

2014 Annual Report of the Abington Fire Department

I am pleased to submit the 132nd annual report for the Abington Fire-Rescue & Emergency Services Department for the year 2014.

2014 saw the passing of one of our retired firefighters, Lester Bradbury, in December. Lester proudly served the residents of Abington as a firefighter from 1966 until 1996, while also serving as the department fire alarm superintendant.

2014 continued to bring personnel changes within the department, with the retirement of Fire Captain David Farrell. Captain Farrell began his career with Abington Fire as a call firefighter in 1974, permanent firefighter in 1976, captain in 1984, and acting deputy for a short time in 1996. Captain Farrell was the founding coordinator of the Student Awareness of Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) Program in 1995, and continued to teach classes until retirement.

Firefighter/Paramedic Brian Fogg was promoted to Fire Captain in September. Captain Fogg had been a Firefighter since 2005, and has already commanded several large incidents.

Firefighter/Paramedic Craig Snell was hired in September, and graduated the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy in November. Firefighter/Paramedic Snell brings experience from working with the Fall River Fire/EMS Department to Abington, and is proving to be a very competent member. I congratulate both Captain Fogg and Firefighter Snell on their accomplishments.

The Abington Fire Department was awarded a FEMA FY2013 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant in August, which will allow for the hiring of four Firefighter/Paramedics for two years. In December, Paramedics Steven Gregory and Adam Levine were hired, both with experience in the private and/or Boston EMS departments. This allowed Abington to immediately begin operating a second ambulance on a part-time basis, until they are able to attend the fire academy in April. At that time, we will have hired an additional two paramedics to complete the cycle until all four are fully trained firefighter/paramedics, estimated to be around September 2015. This will then allow Abington to staff our work groups with 6 members, a vital need last attained in 1992, even though we now respond to 200% more calls than that year. The means to maintain the new members after the grant period should be greatly offset from the revenues gained by operating a second ambulance. The greatest benefit to maintaining staffing at 6 member work groups will be eliminating the dangerous practice of allowing a single member to respond to an emergency alone.

Since 2011, the Abington Fire Department has been able to hire 11 members to replace those lost through retirements or attrition. This represents almost 50% of the department, and has presented an opportunity to shuffle or create numerous internal specialties within the organization. These specialties include the Municipal Fire Alarm Division, Department Mechanics, Emergency Medical Services Coordinators, S.A.F.E. Coordinator, Radio Specialist, Public Information Officer, Technical & Dive Rescue, Training, Records, and several other areas as we continue to grow and meet today's challenges.

The newer members have been able to gain and share experience quickly, due to the busy call volume presented by Abington, and from their interest in this profession. The new and veteran members of this department continue to rise to the demands required for a small but busy fire department, and I am proud of the work which they are able to accomplish. This pride was able to be shown to the entire Commonwealth on October 28, when four of our members, Captain David Farrell (Ret.), Firefighter/Paramedics Michael Driscoll, Richard Smith and Jarrod Driscoll were awarded a group citation for their efforts at a propane fire on December 6, 2013 from Governor Duval Patrick at the annual Firefighter of the Year Award Ceremony in Boston.

Beyond our professional employees, the other half of any fire department is the equipment required to perform the duties as needed. 2014 was a very mixed year for our equipment inventory and needs, mainly due to the unfortunate discovery of a major structural defect in the Town's 1987 aerial ladder truck. This occurred in May, and by June, the truck was deemed entirely unfit for service and taken out of service permanently. The Board of Selectmen were officially notified of this issue and the cost of replacement, and an article was drafted to be presented to the residents at the June 9 town meeting. Abington residents voted unanimously to spend \$1,200,000.00 to purchase and equip a new aerial ladder truck, a fact which I am very thankful and humbled by. A department aerial truck committee was formed, which ultimately chose Ferrara Fire Apparatus to engineer, build and equip a 100' mid-mount tower quint, which should be delivered in May of 2015. This aerial fire apparatus should prove to be a capable and robust firefighting tool for the needs of Abington for the next 25-30 years of service.

In June, all four engines began a new pump testing and maintenance program whereby a vendor brings specialized testing equipment to Abington, rather than our apparatus being brought to a centralized service area. This allows for all of the equipment to be tested in one day, rather than over a week's time. This also followed some costly repairs to Abington's newest fire pumper, Engine 3, a 2006 E-One. Some of these repairs are due to the constant use the fire apparatus endures, even though we try to place the engines on a rotating basis.

In July, the Abington Fire Department was able to replace the c1968 aluminum boat with a stable and more powerful inflatable boat designed for water rescue.

The summer was spent researching, designing, engineering, specifying and ultimately contracting with Ferrara Apparatus for the aerial tower truck.

In September the Abington Fire Department was chosen by the Plymouth County Technical Rescue Team to house a fully equipped specialized rescue equipment response trailer at Station One.

In October, all of the department's fire hose, attack nozzles and water delivery appliances were replaced through FEMA funds from another successful Assistance to Firefighters grant award. For firefighters, this means that everything from the fire hydrant to the actual fire, not including the pumper truck itself, is brand new and up to current NFPA standards, and replaces much equipment that was purchased in the 1960's.

In November, the department placed the Town's newest ambulance, "A-4," into service. This is a 2015 International TerraStar Ambulance, which is operated at the advanced life support paramedic level. This is built on a larger truck type of chassis, to protect the structural integrity of the patient compartment, a chronic issue Abington has dealt with in the past. Included in the purchase of the ambulance is a Lucas CPR compression device, which has already had several successful resuscitations as of this report; and a Powerlift Stryker patient stretcher, designed to reduce firefighter/paramedic back injuries.

To compensate for the ladder truck remaining out of service, the department needed to purchase additional tools and equipment to allow the four engines to operate independently at a fire scene and to quickly place the surrounding communities' ladder trucks back in service. This equipment included portable scene lighting, chimney fire nozzles, forcible entry tools, etc. The final result of this reorganization of our engine companies is a much stronger and more capable fire department, as now each engine can also operate independently from each other, when sufficient manpower is available.

The fire stations also required replacement and updating of antiquated equipment, including the replacement of both 1950's era air compressors, which were deemed dangerous from a state inspector. Also addressed were electrical and plumbing renovations, and the continuation of the large antenna tower and radio array for the communications system.

Although we will continue to maintain both fire stations as economically as possible, it must be noted that the Town of Abington is long overdue for a complete replacement of the existing fire stations, both in physical size and locations. The proposed widening of Bedford Street in the next few years will likely have a negative impact to the Headquarters Station, which is too small for the department's needs anyway. A single, centrally located fire station, with ample room for fire apparatus, training facilities, computer systems and living quarters would prove to be a worthy investment for the community, and allow for more emergency response options for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

The emergency responses, patient transports and fire prevention data is listed below, with the main consideration being another record year for the number of overall incidents. To address these requests for service, which will undoubtedly continue to rise due to the ever increasing growth in the Town of Abington, it will be imperative to maintain the six-members per work group after the federal grant program concludes.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Nuttall
Chief of Department

Members of the Abington Fire-Rescue & Emergency Services Department 2014:

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| John M. Nuttall, <i>Chief/EMT-I</i> | Shawn Hardy, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Edward F. Belcher, <i>Deputy Chief/EMT</i> | Christopher O'Toole, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Patricia Gordon, <i>Executive Assistant</i> | Matthew Croall, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| David M. Farrell, <i>Captain/EMT (Ret)</i> | Justin Silva, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Brian Fogg, <i>Captain/Paramedic</i> | Christopher Cotti, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| John Glynn, <i>Captain/Paramedic</i> | Jarrold Driscoll, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Ronald Howe, <i>Captain/Paramedic</i> | Anthony Conso, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| George Gardiner, Jr., <i>Captain/Paramedic</i> | Derek Haimaidi, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Michael Driscoll, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> | Katherine Kline, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| John Force, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> | Michael Kolodziej, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Robert Neumeister, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> | Craig Snell, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> |
| Kevin Finch, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> | Adam Levine, <i>Paramedic</i> |
| Richard Smith, <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i> | Steven Gregory, <i>Paramedic</i> |

The Abington Fire Department responded to 3,497 emergency calls for service, including:

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| 15 | Structure Fires |
| 8 | Vehicle Fires |
| 58 | Outside/Wildland Fires |
| 5 | Other Fires |
| 2,136 | Emergency Medical Responses |
| 172 | Assist Police |
| 166 | Hazardous Conditions |
| 101 | Service Calls |
| 160 | Good Intent Calls |
| 364 | False Alarms |
| 412 | All Other Calls |
| 494 | Motor Vehicle Accidents |
| 1,396 | Patient Transports |
| 1,151 | Patient Assessments (No Transport) |

In addition to emergency or service requests, we also provided the following Fire Prevention, Inspectional and Public Safety Services:

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| 983 | Inspections |
| 584 | Permits |
| 585 | Open Burning Permits |
| 95 | Child Safety Seats Installed |